



For Immediate Release – December 22, 2017

CAD-ASC JOINS WFD IN ANNOUNCING UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION OF INTERNATIONAL DAY OF SIGN LANGUAGES

OTTAWA, Canada - On December 19, 2017, the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) announced in a press release that a resolution to declare **September 23rd** as **International Day of Sign Languages (IDSL)** was officially adopted at the 72nd United Nations (UN) General Assembly.

As an Ordinary Member of the World Federation of the Deaf, the Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds Canada (CAD-ASC) would like to extend our congratulations to the WFD in their advocacy work bringing attention to the importance of Sign Languages as a human right for Deaf people around the world.

CAD-ASC welcomes the breakthrough development at the United Nations in officially recognizing the **International Day of Sign Languages** where Canada is one of the countries listed as additional sponsors to the [UN resolution](#). CAD-ASC applauds the federal government for supporting this resolution, putting Canada among the leaders promoting Deaf human rights across the globe.

The press release from the WFD states the following:

The choice of 23 September commemorates the date that the WFD was established in 1951. This day marks the birth of an advocacy organisation, which has as one of its main goals, the preservation of sign languages and deaf culture as pre-requisites to the realisation of the human rights of deaf people.

The first International Day of Sign Languages will be celebrated on 23 September 2018 as part of the International Week of the Deaf.

Quoting the message from World Federation of the Deaf President Colin Allen:

“This resolution recognises the importance of sign language and services in sign language being available to deaf people as early in life as possible. It also emphasises the principle of “nothing about us without us” in terms of working with Deaf Communities. With effect from year 2018, the WFD is overjoyed at the prospect of observing and celebrating this day annually.’

To read more of WFD’s press release, click the link here - [WFD Press Release](#).

The IDSL will be celebrated each year on September 23rd to promote Sign Languages as being equal to spoken languages. It will also coincide with the International Week of the Deaf that focuses on advocacy and public awareness about human rights for Deaf persons, including the crucial place of Sign Languages in the development of educational, economic, and social equality for Deaf children, youth, and adults.

During Canada’s appearance in Geneva at the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in April 2017, UN Committee members were concerned that Canada had yet to recognize its two national Sign Languages. As reported in the [“Concluding observations on the initial report of Canada”](#) on May 8, 2017, it was stated that the Canadian government needs to officially recognize the two national Sign Languages.

It is important to acknowledge that over 42 countries around the world have recognized their national Sign Languages through federal legislation. However, Canada is one of the countries that has not yet recognized its two national Sign Languages - American Sign Language (ASL) and langue des signes québécoise (LSQ). CAD-ASC appeals to the Government of Canada to introduce federal accessibility legislation that will recognize the two national Sign Languages- ASL and LSQ. Sign Language is a fundamental aspect of accessibility and signifies the protection of Deaf persons' human rights in Canada. This will reinforce the cultural and linguistic identities of Deaf individuals in their respective Canadian Anglophone and Francophone communities, moving us closer to becoming a fully inclusive and accessible country.

The recognition of Sign Languages is a key element of human rights related to Deaf persons, as clearly outlined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) as described in [Article 21](#). CAD-ASC would like to ensure that the Government of Canada implements this UN resolution on the International Day of Sign Languages, by first enacting federal legislation that recognizes Canada's two national Sign Languages- American Sign Language (ASL) and langue des signes québécoise (LSQ).

Message from CAD-ASC President Frank Folino:

“It is a matter of human rights that we embrace our two national Sign Languages to promote equal opportunities for Deaf people in our Canadian society that will open up a wealth of opportunities through social, cultural, economic, civil and political rights. It is also part of Canada's obligation as a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.”

For more information about the United Nations Resolution on the International Day Sign Languages, including the UN's 6 official languages at this [link](#).

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About Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC):

The Canadian Association of the Deaf-Association des Sourds du Canada (CAD-ASC) is a not-for-profit organization as a national information, research and community action organization of Deaf people in Canada. Founded in 1940, CAD-ASC provides consultation and information on Deaf issues to the public, business, media, educators, governments and others; conduct research and collects data. CAD-ASC promotes and protects the rights, needs, and concerns of Deaf people who use American Sign Language (ASL) and langue des signes québécoise (LSQ). CAD-ASC is affiliated with the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD), and CAD-ASC is a United Nations-accredited Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. For more information, visit www.cad.ca.